

REMARKS

The Office Action of January 26, 2009, has been carefully reviewed, and in view of the above amendments and the following remarks, reconsideration and allowance of the pending claims are respectfully requested.

In the above Office Action, the Examiner objected to claims 1-4 and 6-27 due to informalities. In addition, claims 1, 6-19, 21-24, 27 and 34-37 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Carrozzi et al. (EP 1 004 269) in view of DeMeester et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,029,081). Claims 2-4, 20, 25-26, 28, 30, 32 and 33 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Carrozzi et al. in view of DeMeester et al. as applied above, and in further view of Tazaki (JP 11028199).

Responsive to the objection to claims 1-4 and 6-27, claim 1 has been amended as set forth above to correct the informalities noted by the Examiner. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully contend the objections have been obviated.

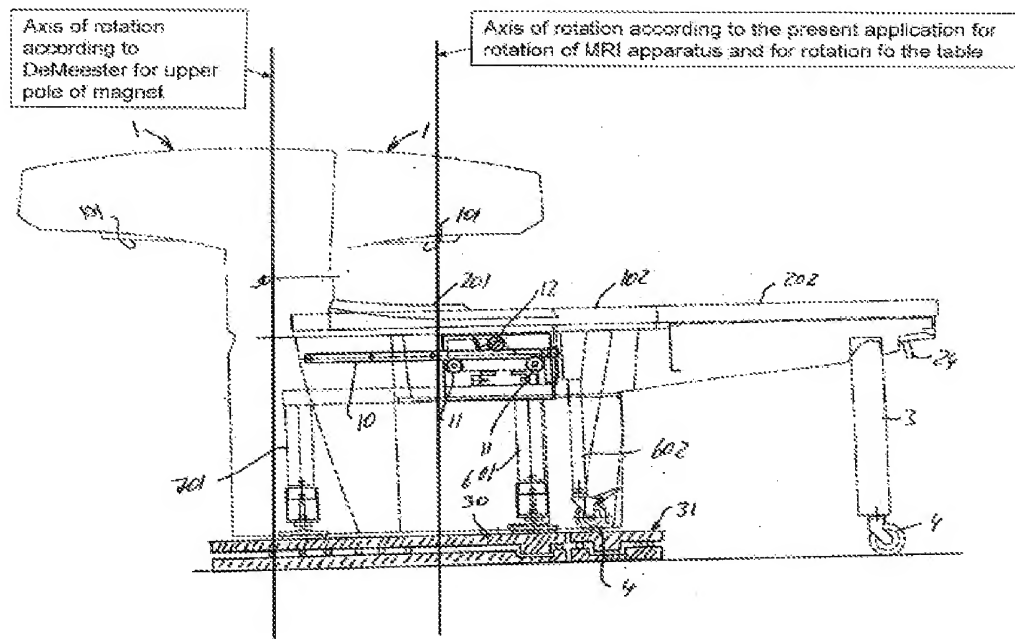
Claim 1 recites, *inter alia*, that the base block of the magnetic resonance imaging apparatus is disposed on a platform interposed between the magnetic resonance imaging apparatus and a floor. Applicants respectfully submit that this arrangement is not found in the cited prior art. As clearly shown in Figures 4-5 of Carrozzi, the base block of the magnetic resonance imaging is disposed on stationary legs resting directly on a floor. In comparison, Fig. 6 of the instant application illustrates platform 30 inserted between the magnetic resonance imaging apparatus and the floor. Hence, this feature is not disclosed or suggested in Carrozzi, or any of the other cited references.

Claim 1 further recites that the platform has a base plate and an upper magnetic resonance imaging apparatus supporting plate, and that rotary and sliding guide means are provided such that the platform is rotatable along an annular path coaxial to an axis of the guide forming the curved connection between the patient table and the magnetic imaging apparatus, and that the upper support plate is slidable relative to the base plate. Hence, since the base block of the magnetic resonance imaging apparatus is disposed on the platform, it is clear that the magnetic imaging apparatus is also displaced when the platform rotates.

As recognized by the Examiner, Carrozzi does not disclose any means for rotating the MRI apparatus itself (i.e., as shown in Fig. 5, the support legs are resting directly on the floor). Referring to Page 8, lines 5-7 of the Final Rejection, the Examiner states that "[t]he DeMeester reference, which is being relied upon for the rotatable magnet structure clearly uses a rotational MR drive which sits on an axis (the same axis of motion of the table)." For at least the following reasons, Applicants traverse the rejections of the claims based on Carrozzi et al. in view of the above interpretation of DeMeester et al.

Claim 1 provides for coaxial axis of rotation of a) the MRI apparatus relative to the ground and of b) the patient table relatively to the MRI system. DeMeester discloses that the magnet 20 is mounted on rollers or wheels 56 which engage a track 58 laid out on the floor. The patient table in DeMeester is not displaced relative to the magnet, which is part of the MRI apparatus. Further, DeMeester does not disclose an MRI apparatus which can be rotated in the sense that the entire magnet is rotated. Instead, only one of the two poles forming the magnet (which is part of the MRI apparatus) can be rotated relative to the other part.

Combining Carrozzi with the teaching of DeMeester, as proposed by the Examiner, would lead to a configuration such as that shown below:



As one skilled in the art would appreciate, the above magnet configuration would be distorted since every variation of the relative position of the two poles will effect positioning tolerances. Accordingly, Applicants reiterate that the claimed invention would not be obvious over the cited prior art.

In rejecting claims 2-4, 20, 25-26, 28, 30, 32 and 33 in further view of Tazaki (JP 11028199), the Examiner contends that Tazaki provides a motivation for the use of multiple rotatable and variably positionable tables. With reference to Figure 2, Tazaki discloses that one patient table 6 is moved to locations P1-P6. Hence, Tazaki fails to provide a suggestion for the simultaneous connection of two or more tables. Applicants respectfully contend that the prior art fails to suggest two or more tables that can be positioned relative to each other and to the magnetic resonance

imaging apparatus, as recited in claims 2, 28 and 34, and that such would not be obvious, *without the impermissible use of hindsight*.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that the claims of the present application are now in condition for allowance, and an early indication of the same is earnestly solicited.

Should any questions arise in connection with this application or should the Examiner believe that a telephone conference would be helpful in resolving any remaining issues pertaining to this application; the Examiner is kindly invited to call the undersigned counsel for Applicants regarding the same.

Respectfully submitted,

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